

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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REP. SMITH DISMAYED OVER LATEST, INADEQUATE BMV PROPOSAL

INDIANAPOLIS—State Rep. Vernon G. Smith (D-Gary) said he is frustrated and angry about Bureau of Motor Vehicle (BMV) Commissioner Joel Silverman's latest proposal for a partial-service BMV branch in Gary.

In a recent letter to Reps. Smith and Charlie Brown (D-Gary), State Sen. Earline Rogers (D-Gary), and Gary Mayor Scott King, Silverman announced his plan to open a partial-service branch in a Indiana Family and Social Services Administration building at 661 Broadway. The office would be located in a 400-foot space, with only two terminals and limited hours of operation. In addition, the facility would not open until December 1.

"This is totally inadequate," said Dr. Smith. "Commissioner Silverman closed a fully functional branch that serviced the fifth largest city in the state of Indiana only to offer a one-terminal operation, which we legislators told him would not work. Now he wants to offer a partial service, two-terminal operation in a small conference room located in an overused building. On top of that, the office would be open only Monday through Friday and close each day at 4:30 (p.m.). This is ridiculous. Two terminals are not enough to service the needs of our city. The parking at that building will be impossible to find. And working people will not be able to go there during business hours. Silverman won't even open this undersized branch on Saturdays. I am not pleased. I am angry.

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"In addition, for the next month, anyone from Gary who needs BMV services will have to travel to another community to do business," continued Smith. "This proposal shows how little regard Gov. Daniels and Silverman have for our community and our people. Such a proposal is outrageous and causes additional insult to injury. I promise that we shall monitor the wait our citizens have to endure at this mini-branch. We will monitor how many people are able to use the undersized branch. And we will monitor the difficulty our citizens have in finding parking at this overused building. We will hold Daniels and his administration accountable."

Smith said he will work with other members of the Indiana General Assembly to draft legislation to create a greater oversight of the BMV and its power to close branches without legislative input.

Dr. Smith urged Gary residents to utilize the new BMV branch once it is open, even though there will be long lines and difficult parking, instead of going to other branches in Lake County. He said it is important for BMV officials to see that there is a justification and a sincere need for a full-service branch in Gary.

"The BMV is in existence to serve the residents of our state, not to cause greater difficulties for them," Smith said. "If Daniels and Silverman think the citizens of Gary will be placated with crumbs from the governor's table in Indianapolis, they had better reevaluate the strength, determination and courage of the people of our community. We will fight for our rights until justice is regained."

